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GENERAL

1. Comment on Soviet refusal to resume Austrian treaty talks:

The Soviet rejection of a bid for four-power discussion of an Austrian treaty appears to be primarily a delaying action. By emphasizing the futility of further discussion on the deputies' level, the USSR may be attempting to retain its bargaining position for higher-level talks where broader issues can be negotiated. The USSR may also be hoping through a prolonged exchange of notes to promote further dissension among the Allies.

Pravda recently stressed that the Soviet Union could not accept any preconditions to discussions of major world issues. The Soviet refusal, therefore, also reflects the new government's sensitivity to being "forced" into negotiations.

The Kremlin may consider that it can conduct its present "peace offensive" by a continuation of minor conciliatory gestures, and through the Korean negotiations, without making major concessions in Europe.

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4. Negotiations for evacuating Nationalists from Burma may soon be stalled:

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Chinese Nationalist foreign minister George Yeh has termed "absurd" the Burmese plan for establishing a temporary safety zone for Nationalist troops in the Mong Hsat area. He told the American charge that it is impossible for the mixed committee to visit Mong Hsat until the Burmese order a general cease-fire. In addition, according to the foreign minister, General Li Mi refuses to order his troops to cooperate in any evacuation before a general cease-fire.

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Yeh also made it clear that both he and Chiang Kai-shek shared Li Mi's views, explaining that it would be impossible for Mong Hsat to be "isolated" in a safety zone while the Burmese continued to attack subordinate units elsewhere.

Comment: According to reports from the American embassy in Bangkok, there is very little more the committee can do until the Nationalists arrange for it to proceed to Mong Hsat.

The Burmese have steadfastly refused to consider a general cease-fire, although they have agreed to one in the evacuation areas.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5. Arab Legion reported regrouping on Israeli frontier:

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Ambassador Green reports that the situation along the Israeli-Jordanian border is "more potentially explosive" now than at any time in the past 10 months. He has been authoritatively informed that Arab Legion units on the border are being reinforced and regrouped in preparation for any eventuality.

The ambassador warns that his counsel of moderation may fall on deaf ears because the Jordanian prime minister appears to lack his predecessor's restraint.

Comment: In the past the presence of the Arab Legion, which is under British control, has been a moderating influence in Jordan's relations with Israel. This fact, along with the superior strength of the Israeli forces, suggests that the legion's moves are precautionary.

On the diplomatic front, the Jordanian government has asked the United States, as a guarantor of the status quo, to take steps against Israel's "aggressive activities."

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